

Supervisor Romaine and Town Chief Fire Marshal Demonstrate Explosive Hazards of Deep Frying Turkey

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Farmingville, NY – On November 20, Supervisor Ed Romaine and Town Chief Fire Marshal Chris Mehrman presented a dramatic demonstration showing the explosive fire danger associated with deep frying a turkey in hot oil. This method of cooking is a growing trend, especially during the holidays, and has become popular in recent years with the availability of inexpensive, portable oil deep fryers. According to the National Fire Prevention Association (NFPA), deep-fryer fires are responsible for five deaths, 60 injuries, the destruction of 900 homes, and more than \$15-million in property damage each year.

Supervisor Romaine said, "The fireball that we saw during the demonstration clearly showed how the improper use of turkey fryers can lead to personal injury and the destruction of property. I hope that people who use deep fryers follow all the manufacturer's safety instructions and keep a fire extinguisher handy. We want to make sure that everyone has a safe and happy holiday season."

The NFPA discourages the use of outdoor gas-fueled turkey fryers that cook the turkey in hot oil and has issued the following turkey fryer safety tips:

- Hot oil may splash or spill during the cooking. Contact between hot oil and skin could result in serious injury.
- A hot oil spill can happen with fryers designed for outdoor use using a stand. The fryer could tip over or collapse causing the hot oil to spill. Newer countertop units using a solid base appear to reduce this risk. NFPA does not believe the risks of either type of turkey fryer to be acceptable because of the large amount of hot oil involved and the speed and severity of burns.
- In deep frying, oil is heated to temperatures of 350° Fahrenheit or more. Cooking oil is combustible. If it is heated above its cooking temperature, its vapors can ignite.
- Propane-fired turkey fryers must be used outdoors. They are very popular for Thanksgiving. Many parts of the country may have rain or snow at this time of year. If rain or snow hits the hot cooking oil, the oil may splatter or turn to steam, leading to burns.
- Turkeys must be completely thawed before placing in the fryer because a partially thawed turkey will cause the oil to splatter causing serious burns.
- The fryers use a lot of oil, about five gallons. Considering the size and weight of the turkey, extreme caution must be taken when placing and removing the turkey from the fryer to be sure it is not dropped back into the fryer, splattering the oil on the chef.

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